
2003-2004 *No Child Left Behind*—Blue Ribbon Schools Program
Cover SheetName of Principal Ms. Maria Cimino
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)Official School Name Solace Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)School Mailing Address 101 East Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)Syracuse New York 13224-1512
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)Tel. (315) 435-4877 Fax (315) 435-4876Website/URL _____ E-mail solaceschool@yahoo.com

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____Name of Superintendent* Dr. Stephen C. Jones
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)District Name Syracuse City School District Tel. (315) 4354164

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____Name of School Board Mr. Calvin Corridors
President/Chairperson (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

[Include this page in the school's application as page 2.]

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has not been in school improvement status or been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2003-2004 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 1998.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
7. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school, or the school district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
8. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:

23	Elementary schools
3	Middle schools
5	Junior high schools
4	High schools
6	Other (Briefly explain) (Alternative/Special Education Schools/Programs)
41	TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \$6,195

- Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$7,650

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

[x]	Urban or large central city
[]	Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
[]	Suburban
[]	Small city or town in a rural area
[]	Rural

4. Four Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
 _____ If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total		Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
K	7	12	19		7			
1	8	12	20		8			
2	10	13	23		9			
3	7	12	19		10			
4	14	12	26		11			
5	13	11	24		12			
6	9	12	21		Other			
			TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →					152

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>30</u> | % White |
| <u>65</u> | % Black or African American |
| <u>3</u> | % Hispanic or Latino |
| <u>2</u> | % Asian/Pacific Islander |
| <u>0</u> | % American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| 100% Total | |

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 9.5 %

Please Note: this information is based on 2002/2003 data.

(This rate includes the total number of students who transferred to or from different schools between October 1 and the end of the school year, divided by the total number of students in the school as of October 1, multiplied by 100.)

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	8
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	8
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	169
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	0.095
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9.5%

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: .006%
1 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: 1
Specify languages: Spanish

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 62 %
94 Total Number Students Who Qualify

If this method does not produce a reasonably accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 18 %
27 Total Number of Students Served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

<u>1</u> Autism	<u> </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u> </u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u> </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u> </u> Hearing Impairment	<u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u> </u> Mental Retardation	<u> </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u> </u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>6</u> Emotionally Disturbed	

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

Number of Staff

	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u> </u>
Classroom teachers	<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>4</u>	<u> </u>
Support staff	<u> </u>	<u>5</u>
Total number	<u>16</u>	<u>10</u>

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio: 22:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. (Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.)

	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	96%	95%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	98%	98%	97%	96%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%
Student dropout rate					
Student drop-off rate					

PART III - SUMMARY

Provide a brief, coherent narrative snapshot of the school in one page (approximately 475 words). Include at least a summary of the school's mission or vision in the statement.

Solace Elementary is a K-6 school located in the City of Syracuse, New York (County of Onondaga). The school was formed in 1995 as a demonstration site to model the implementation of brain research on learning. We serve a diverse population of approximately 152 students. Each classroom is a heterogeneous group of children with a wide range of academic, social and emotional needs and development. Our disaggregated data indicates that our minority students have a higher rate of success than those at other schools in our district.

Solace Elementary School is an interdependent community of learners whose mission is to ensure that all students demonstrate excellence in both academics and social/life skills, so as to become responsible, productive members of our global society. This is accomplished in a safe, inclusive learning environment by providing innovative, researched-based instruction and support for students, their families and teachers; readily aligning with the No Child Left Behind Legislation and the district-wide goals of the Syracuse City School District.

We achieve our mission by creating a community within the school. This is fostered by the belief that each individual student is the responsibility of the whole learning community. While every staff member has a particular area of academic responsibility, the entire building works collectively to ensure that we are all learning, and growing as a community. We begin each day with all students and staff gathering in the gymnasium to welcome the day and celebrate each other's milestones and achievements. This daily ritual builds our learning community and fosters appreciation of our common mission and purpose. Our focus on life skills and lifelong guidelines reflects our belief that each student is a productive and contributing member of the community.

Solace's innovative school-wide program embraces the concepts of Integrated Thematic Instruction and Brain Compatible Education. All staff members, including the principal, teachers, and support staff, share a common goal of nurturing responsible citizens. Curriculum is adapted and implemented on the premise that intelligence is a function of experience – that the brain learns best with “being there” or immersion experiences. Activities and assignments are designed to incorporate theories of multiple intelligences.

One of our major strengths is our parent and community involvement component, which includes a wide variety of volunteer activities and professional development initiatives. Parents and community members are appreciated as collegial partners in the educational process. We thoroughly enjoy the benefits of such initiatives as the Foster Grandparent Program. Our parents serve as tutors, expert presenters, storytellers, planners of social activities, and provide various other services and resources. At Solace, parents are always welcome and encouraged to participate in school activities.

Furthermore, our collaborative relationships with Syracuse University, LeMoyne College, and area State University of New York (SUNY) colleges provide teacher preparation and staff development training, in innovative practices, in the areas of math instruction (Eisenhower Grant) and literacy development (the Early Literacy Project).

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Describe in one page the meaning of the school's assessment results in reading (language arts or English) and mathematics in such a way that someone not intimately familiar with the tests can easily understand them.

In New York State, an elementary student's/school's academic performance level and achievement of English language arts (ELA) and mathematics tests is shown using four levels, each encompassing a range of scores. The levels indicate how well students are progressing toward meeting learning standards, ranging from Level 1, indicating no proficiency, to Level 4, indicating advanced proficiency.

The ELA levels are described as follows: **Level 4:** Students consistently demonstrate understanding of written and oral text beyond the literal level. They can analyze and interpret a variety of text, identify significant story elements, compare and synthesize information from related texts, and form insightful opinions, using extensive supporting details. Students' writing is well organized, thoroughly developed, and uses sophisticated and effective language, with few or no errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation. **Level 3:** Students demonstrate understanding of written or oral text with some attention to meaning beyond the literal level. They can gather information, make inferences, identify theme or main idea, understand character actions, and make connections between two related texts, providing some supporting information. Students' writing is generally focused and organized, with minor errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation that do not interfere with readability. **Level 2:** Students demonstrate partial understanding of written and oral text at a literal level. They can recognize basic story elements, make some inferences, and identify some similarities and differences in two related texts, providing limited supporting information. Students' writing shows some structure and vocabulary. Students follow some rules for correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation, but errors sometimes interfere with readability. **Level 1:** Students demonstrate minimal understanding of written and oral text. They can locate and recall some stated information, and attempt to construct short and extended responses. Students' writing consists of brief, general, or repetitive statements, and reveals difficulty in organizing thoughts. Errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation interfere with readability and comprehension.

The Math levels are described as follows: **Level 4:** Students order decimals; identify place value; use percent; use estimation; apply graphical data; predict effect of a biased sample; identify equivalence within a measurement system; find linear, square, and cubic measure; model solid figures; predict probability; identify arrangements and combinations; create and describe patterns; explain reasoning; draw conclusions; analyze situations. **Level 3:** students consistently solve multi-step problems; identify odds/evens; order fractions; use manipulatives to model decimal relationships; identify percent; collect, organize, display, and interpret real-world data; use appropriate units of measure; identify points, lines, rays, planes, polygons; identify faces of solid figures; express probability; extend a numerical pattern; justify a reasonable solution. **Level 2:** Students for the most part use basic facts for all operations; add/subtract with regrouping; use ordinals; order whole numbers; use whole-number place value; model operations and simple fractional relationships with manipulatives; read/interpret data; identify appropriate units of measurement; identify polygons; identify lines of symmetry; extend and describe simple patterns; solve for an unknown with manipulatives. **Level 1:** Students may use basic addition and subtraction; identify first and last numbers; count groups of objects; use manipulatives to model whole-number relationships; recognize simple data; use counting to determine perimeter and area of simple figures; understand that some events are more likely than others; use manipulatives to explore patterns.

For the 2002/2003 academic year, 90.9% of Solace 4th grade students scored a 3 or higher in ELA and no student received a score of 1. In Math, 100% of Solace students scored a 3 or higher. In such, Solace met and exceeded the New York State standards for ELA and Math, and is currently ranked number 1 among all District elementary schools. In addition, they are ranked 2nd, for ELA, among all elementary schools in the County of Onondaga.

2. Show in one-half page (approximately 200 words) how the school uses assessment data to understand and improve student and school performance.

Solace Elementary School students excelled on the ELA, MST, and Social Studies state assessments. The students achieved a 100% pass rate on the 4th grade Mathematics assessment, and a 90.9% pass rate on the 4th grade English/Language Arts assessment.

The entire Solace community works together to ensure that this rate of success continues, and grows each year. We are able to ensure that our students are showing growth by working together to create a yearly item analysis of the New York State assessments our children are expected to take (i.e., ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies). These exams are developed by the New York State Education Department to assess whether the children are meeting the standards set by the State. We also utilize a district-wide assessment known as the Terra Nova Tests, which are given at grades 2, 3, 5, and 6. These tests compare our students' achievements to other students locally and nationally at the identified grade levels.

In completing this analysis, Solace's School Improvement Team analyzes the results, categorizing areas of strength as well as deficits. The team meets and discusses skills that students mastered, as well as skills that require more instruction and reinforcement to cement the learning process. We then review our teaching methods to identify those methods, which closely address the various skills required to meet New York State and national standards. We then identify the instructional practices that were successful and revise or discontinue those that were not so successful.

The information gathered from the item analysis is used to evaluate and modify our delivery of instruction, and use of instructional strategies to enhance academic achievement. These modifications are compiled and documented in our annual School Improvement Plan. This plan dictates our goals and strategies for improving student and school performance for the academic year. Through our annual review and implementation of the School Improvement Plan, we continuously reflect upon our instructional practices and thus implement changes that accurately address the needs of the students to ensure they meet and or exceed both local and national academic standards.

3. Describe in one-half page how the school communicates student performance, including assessment data, to parents, students, and the community.

Each year Solace Elementary School submits a Family and Community Involvement Policy Plan (FCIPP) to the Syracuse City School District. Our main objectives of this plan are to increase parental participation in school-wide programs and activities, and to enhance communication between home and school, which coupled will assist with increasing student achievement in ELA, Social Studies and Math, Science and Technology. The plan includes activities in the areas of communicating, parenting, learning at home, decision-making and governance, volunteering, and collaborating with the community. For the 2003/2004 academic school year, Solace Elementary created a Title I Parent Involvement Plan that specifically focused on three of the six components included in the FCIPP: communication, learning at home, and decision-making and governance. In addition, the school hosts ELA/Social Studies and MST nights with a “make and take” component in which teachers demonstrate how to use Math, ELA, Science or Social Studies games and or activities to help students with their homework. In addition, parents are provided the opportunity to construct their own games and or activities to take home and use with their child(ren). This year the school plans to provide dinner and transportation, along with parent instruction and student activities during these sessions.

The Family and Community Involvement Policy Plan also includes a School-Parent Compact which states that the School and teachers have agreed to openly communicate student performance, including assessment data, to parents, students, and the community through annual parent-teacher-student conferences, frequent written and verbal reports to parents on their child (ren)’s progress, reasonable access to teachers and staff, opportunities to volunteer, participate in and or observe their child (ren)’s classroom activities, school and District-wide (News and Notes) newsletters, press releases, Superintendent’s Conference Days, and recognition ceremonies.

4. Describe in one-half page how the school will share its successes with other schools.

Sharing first began when Solace Elementary School was in its design stages. Solace was set up to be a demonstration school, in which teachers from other schools would be welcome (and invited) to come and observe model lessons, and then further discuss implementation of the observed lessons. Over the last nine years, our program has evolved to include a variety of opportunities for other administrators and their staff to observe our programming. The following are a list of vehicles that have and will continue to be used to share our success with other schools:

- Reading Specialist shares the programs at monthly district-level Reading Specialist meetings.
- The Books & Bagels program, led by the Reading Specialist, is a program that facilitates parent involvement in our English/Language Arts.
- Sixth grade teachers lead workshops on Connected Math, a program in which our middle school age students participate.
- Presentations to the Superintendent's Taskforce and Strategic Planning Teams.
- Monthly breakfast meetings with the Superintendent and other District staff.
- Programming ideas and successes are shared at monthly Principal's Academy meetings.
- Our fourth grade teacher has met with other fourth grade teachers in our district to share programming ideas for successes on the New York State fourth grade assessments.
- SECME (Science, Engineering, Communications, and Math Excellence) workshops, a science program run in conjunction with Syracuse University. We were the first elementary school to participate in SECME.
- District Teacher Mentor Program in which Solace tenured teachers mentor novice teachers.
- Integrated Thematic Instruction model workshops lead by Solace Teachers.
- Teacher visitations (other principals request time for their teachers to come observe our classrooms).

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

- 1. Describe in one page the school's curriculum. Outline in several sentences the core of each curriculum area and show how all students are engaged with significant content based on high standards. Include art and foreign languages in the descriptions (foreign language instruction as a part of the regular curriculum is an eligibility requirement for middle, junior high, high schools, and elementary schools in grades seven and higher).**

Solace Elementary School's curriculum is a standards-based curriculum, which aligns with the New York State Learning Standards. In all District-wide curriculum documents, the Standards are viewed with the Key Ideas and Performance Indicators from the New York State Curriculum. The performance indicators are then translated for each grade level into the form of benchmarks.

Implementing curriculum with the objective of meeting the standards and grade-level benchmarks in a way that engages the learner for authentic learning experiences and powerful outcomes is the goal of the Solace Staff and Community. The model for integrating curriculum around a yearlong conceptual theme, as in Integrated Thematic Instruction developed by Susan Kovalik (Susan Kovalik & Associates, 1993) is the inspiration and basis for the innovative, experience-rich educational environment at Solace. Effective practices in instructional design and presentation are continually studied to improve student learning. Brain research, including multiple intelligences and the role of movement in learning, influences instruction at Solace.

Introductory experiences provide active, participatory immersion leading to the development of concepts and skills integrated throughout the language arts, social studies, science, math, fine arts, health and physical education curricula. The student's physically active, visual, auditory, and tactile experiences create a context that allows relevant patterns and conceptual programs to be built into the student's framework for learning. "Being there" experiences in a variety of community settings, as introductions to topics of study rather than the typical "culminating activity" at the end of a unit, have shown to be sound educational practice, resulting in "anchoring" the concepts for the learner and providing the brain-compatible milieu for effective, long-lasting learning. Enriching the learning environment with such field study trips, hosting guest experts in the classroom, obtaining artifacts to examine, and conducting small and large-group inquiries designed to probe for solutions have been at Solace as the *basis* of the program. We work on the understanding that the human brain is designed for investigation and that the best learning takes place in movement and active involvement with the subject.

Developing skills and competencies in the processes of learning - the "how to learn" as well as "what to learn" - is another important aspect of our teaching and the students learning. We strive to empower students with the tools and confidence through experience that will make them eager lifelong learners. Students are able to delve into any area of study with the knowledge and expertise of how to approach problems and solve them successfully. Solace carries out our mission to implement curriculum in an exemplary way. This helps ensure that no child is left behind.

To ensure that Solace carries out our mission to implement curriculum in an exemplary way, the staff and parent community is committed to the Consensus model of decision making (Butler & Rothstein, 1991) which enables us to pursue interdisciplinary problem-solving in curricular and community initiatives.

2. Describe in one-half page the school's reading curriculum, including a description of why the school chose this particular approach to reading.

At Solace our population is very diverse. Therefore, the needs and levels of functioning are diverse. In the past our basic reading program was the Signature Series, an anthology by Harcourt Brace. Recently, our district has adopted a scientific research-based literacy text by Scott, Foresman and Company. This is, however, only one component of our program. All forms of communication, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening, are equally important. The reading program includes the following:

- Mini skill lessons;
- Building Blocks & Four Blocks;
- Four Square Writing and Leveled Writing;
- Leveled literature;
- Print-rich environment throughout building so students are immersed in language;
- A silent reading period daily in K-6 for a minimum of fifteen minutes;
- All K-6 teachers read aloud to students on a daily basis for a minimum of twenty minutes;
- Emphasis on phonemic awareness and phonics in primary grades – take home phonic readers;
- “Being-there experiences” (study field trips) taken on a regular basis to provide real life experiences that provide a frame of reference to cement classroom learning;
- Journal writing across the curriculum to reflect upon learning;
- Peer tutoring throughout building;
- Community volunteers reading to/with students; and
- Employing Bloom’s taxonomy to ensure that students operate at higher levels of thinking as opposed to “just understanding”. It is important for students to be able to dialogue, evaluate and communicate their feelings and perceptions. This is accomplished through literacy circles, community gatherings, and learning clubs.

By encouraging our students to understand that we read to learn as well as learn to read, a unique partnership is created between students and school. Our goal is for all students to be contributing, communicating and literate members of our school and community.

3. Describe in one-half page one other curriculum area of the school's choice and show how it relates to essential skills and knowledge based on the school's mission.

At Solace, we believe that authentic learning takes place in experiences that involve the student actively and expand the student's frame of reference. Introducing curricular content through structured activities and "being there" experiences provides a brain-compatible learning environment. Integrating curricular areas around a thematic core helps students build a mosaic of understanding, seeing connections and patterns across curricula. For example, in studying Change in New York State, fourth graders visit downtown Syracuse, exploring historical sites relating to the Erie Canal, the Civil War and the Abolition Movement, including the Underground Railroad. Documents and artifacts from these periods take on new relevance with the experience of actually being in the locations of the artifacts. Math concepts and skills of elapsed time, measurement of mileage and distance, estimation, and problem solving are developed in an engaging context that makes learning more meaningful and long lasting. The scientific and technical developments in communication, transportation, industry and commerce are demonstrated not only by viewing historical drawings, photographs, and documents, but also by having the students actually visit the location of the Erie Canal, ride a canal boat, then ride a school bus on Erie Boulevard, the former location of the Canal. A visit to the local newspaper building to tour the plant and observe the various roles played and technologies utilized to develop and produce the daily newspaper reinforces and extends technical and literacy skills. Creating, developing, and printing a school newspaper after learning about the city newspaper further extends the learning and comprehension of both content and context.

The desired outcome is enhanced student learning. Through implementation of these instructional methods, we readily expect our students to enthusiastically comprehend the content and context of the curriculum, and attain the skills deemed necessary and essential to display positive learner outcomes – academic achievement. Thus, we further our mission by ensuring that all students demonstrate excellence in both academics and social/life skills, as to become responsible, productive members of our global society, by providing innovative, researched-based instruction and support for students.

4. Describe in one-half page the different instructional methods the school uses to improve student learning.

A variety of instructional methods are utilized to improve student learning at Solace Elementary School. Integrated thematic and brain compatible instruction are the premise of all strategies and techniques that Solace uses to improve student learning. To foster a community of learners and create an absence of threat environment, Solace begins every day with a *Morning Gathering*. All students and staff gather together where parents, students, and community members are welcomed. The Solace School Learning Community sings together, celebrates birthdays, accomplishments and academic achievements. New students and University and College students are introduced and goodbyes are said to those who are departing. Three “Words of Wisdom” for the day are shared and discussed along with the weekly life skill. We reflect on learning, read the lunch menu, and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Each class then departs the gym and is greeted by the principal with a high-five, a handshake or a hug, whichever the student prefers. Teachers then greet their students at their door in the same manner. Classes then begin the day with a morning meeting where the daily agenda, the three words of wisdom, and the life skill of the week are reviewed. Other instructional methods used to improve student learning include, but are not limited to, the following:

- “Being there experiences” (study field trips) taken on a regular basis to provide real life experiences that provide a frame of reference to bolster classroom learning.
- Life skills and lifelong guidelines incorporated into daily teaching.
- During and after school academic intervention services.
- SECME (Science, Engineering, Communications and Math Excellence) - hands-on inquiry based instruction where students are given problems to solve with facilitation from teachers.
- The use of an outdoor classroom.
- Newspapers In Education program.
- Arts in Education program - professional artists-in-residence utilize various artistic approaches to interact with students and staff in an effort to enhance teaching and learning.

5. Describe in one-half page the school's professional development program and its impact on improving student achievement.

Solace Elementary School's professional development program is integrated into the existing and on-going professional development process of the District. Each school is required to institute its own Site Professional Development Team (SPDT) that develops, monitors and evaluates its school's professional development needs and plan. The goal of this plan is to ensure ongoing professional growth for all building staff to achieve site-based, district-wide, and state objectives.

Solace's professional development plan allows teachers to develop an individual professional growth plan that aligns with the building's select-targeted goals, and the District's five focus areas of literacy, curriculum, assessment, technology, and diversity. This approach encompasses the needs and skills of the entire staff, creating an environment that nurtures growth and achievement in both teaching and learning, and has had a significant impact on student achievement.

We employ a scientific research-based literacy program with professional development strategies that incorporate Four Square writing (K-4), Four Blocks (multi-method, multi-level, framework for grades 1-3), reading in the content areas (K-6), Building Blocks (Pre K-K), Guided Reading (K-6), Process Phonics (K-3), Thinking Maps (K-6), and Writing Workshop (K-6). We have a full time Reading Specialist and a part time Math Specialist who "push" into classrooms, provide other staff with model lessons and team-teach. The staff utilizes peer coaching and team partner teaching on a regular basis.

In order to successfully integrate and implement curriculum, the staff relates new children's literature to Integrated Thematic Instruction themes, has professional book share workshops, and connects NYS standards to lesson objectives. The staff uses data to drive instruction and has been trained in using the following assessments: Investigations, Connected Math, Thinking Math, Reading Development Inventory, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Terra Novas, Running Records, Fox in the Box, Authentic Assessment, Portfolio Assessment, Curriculum Based Assessment and DIBELS. To integrate technology into instruction, we are trained in the most current methods including Assisted Technology and Augmentative Communication. Technology training is ongoing.

Professional development is key to improving student achievement. Solace Elementary School is dedicated to fostering growth and progress among its' staff and students through on-going professional development. This has proven effective in preparing our students to meet and exceed the New York State Learning Standards during the 2002/2003 school year.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Public Schools

In a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Education accompanying the list of nominated schools, the CSSO of each state certifies that the schools have all met the minimum requirements established by the CSSO for “dramatically improved” and achieving at “high levels” or for being in the top 10 percent of schools in the state. The letter from the CSSO to the Secretary explains the criteria used by the state to nominate the schools. States must rely on the state accountability system to identify schools for submission to the Secretary.

Based on state data, the CSSO certifies that the submitted schools meet one of two criteria: 1) dramatic improvement in test scores to high levels in the past three years in reading (language arts or English) and mathematics for schools that draw at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds, or 2) regardless of a school’s demographics, achievement in the top 10 percent of schools in the state as measured by state tests of reading (language arts or English) and mathematics or in the top 10 percent in the state on assessments referenced against national norms in at least the last grade tested.

“Dramatically improved” is defined by the CSSO of each state based on the state’s definition of adequate yearly progress (AYP). All student groups, including disadvantaged students, must show dramatic improvement as shown by disaggregated data. “High levels” is defined by the CSSO of each state, but at a minimum includes student achievement at least at the 55th percentile on state assessments in the highest grade tested even if the school makes AYP.

A student from a “disadvantaged background” is defined as one who is eligible for free or reduced-priced meals at the school, is limited English proficient, is a migrant student, or is a student receiving services under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Each nominated school must show results in reading (language arts or English) and mathematics for at least the last three years using the criteria determined by the CSSO using the state accountability system. If the state uses only assessments referenced against national norms at a particular grade, the school should explain how these tests measure the depth and breadth of the state’s academic content standards. For formatting, if possible use or adapt the sample tables (no charts or graphs) at the end of this application.

If the state allows the use of the PSAT, PLAN, SAT, or ACT as part of its accountability system, at least 90 percent of the students in the appropriate classes must take the tests. For these tests, schools must use national norms. The national school norms for the 90th and 55th percentiles can be found on the U.S. Department of Education’s Web site. If fewer than 90 percent take a particular test, do not report the data. If the PSAT, PLAN, SAT, or ACT are not an official part of the state accountability system, schools should not report the data.

The school must disaggregate the data for socioeconomic groups that comprise sufficient numbers to be a part of the state’s assessment reports. If it is not possible to disaggregate by socioeconomic level, the school should disaggregate by ethnic/racial groups if they comprise sufficient numbers to be statistically significant. Show how all subgroups of students achieved at high levels or improved dramatically in achievement for at least three years. Explain any disparity among subgroups.

The school must specify which groups, if any, are excluded from a test, the reasons for the exclusion, as well as the number and percentage of students excluded. Describe how these students are assessed and attach all tables that show test data to the end of this application. Continue to number the pages consecutively.

Syracuse City School District
Solace Elementary School

English Language Arts – Grade 4
Assessment Results

English/Language Arts Assessment Results - Grade 4					
testing month: January					
Solace School	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
Total School					
% at or Above Basis	100.00%	90.00%	80.00%	96.00%	88.00%
% at or Above Proficient	91.00%	48.00%	41.00%	54.00%	57.00%
% at Advanced	18.00%	15.00%	11.00%	8.00%	8.00%
Number Tested	22	20	46	24	24
Percent Tested	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Number Excluded	0	0	0	0	0
Percent Excluded	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Asian Students					
% at or Above Basis	100.00%	100.00%	50.00%		100.00%
% at or Above Proficient	100.00%	100.00%	50.00%		50.00%
% at Advanced	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%		0.00%
Number Tested	1	1	2		2
Percent Tested	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		100.00%
Number Excluded	0	0	0		0
Percent Excluded	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%		0.00%
Black Students					
% at or Above Basis	100.00%	92.00%	82.00%	93.00%	80.00%
% at or Above Proficient	85.00%	25.00%	32.00%	47.00%	30.00%
% at Advanced	15.00%	8.00%	3.00%	7.00%	0.00%
Number Tested	13	12	34	15	10
Percent Tested	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Number Excluded	0	0	0	0	0
Percent Excluded	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Hispanic Students					
% at or Above Basis			100.00%	100.00%	
% at or Above Proficient			0.00%	0.00%	
% at Advanced			0.00%	0.00%	
Number Tested			1	1	
Percent Tested			100.00%	100.00%	
Number Excluded			0	0	
Percent Excluded			0.00%	0.00%	
Native American					
% at or Above Basis				100.00%	
% at or Above Proficient				100.00%	
% at Advanced				0.00%	
Number Tested				1	
Percent Tested				100.00%	
Number Excluded				0	
Percent Excluded				0.00%	

English/Language Arts Assessment Results - Grade 4					
testing month: January					
Solace School	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
White Students					
% at or Above Basis	100.00%	86.00%	80.00%	100.00%	97.00%
% at or Above Proficient	100.00%	71.00%	70.00%	86.00%	75.00%
% at Advanced	14.00%	29.00%	40.00%	14.00%	17.00%
Number Tested	7	7	10	7	12
Percent Tested	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Number Excluded	0	0	0	0	0
Percent Excluded	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Free/Reduced Lunch					
% at or Above Basis	100.00%	82.00%	71.00%	100.00%	85.00%
% at or Above Proficient	91.00%	27.00%	36.00%	30.00%	46.00%
% at Advanced	12.00%	18.00%	0.00%	0.00%	8.00%
Number Tested	11	11	17	10	13
Percent Tested	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Number Excluded	0	0	0	0	0
Percent Excluded	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Syracuse City School District
Solace Elementary School

Mathematics – Grade 4
Assessment Results

Mathematics Assessment Results - Grade 4					
testing month : June					
Solace School	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
Total School					
% at or Above Basis	100.00%	100.00%	82.00%	78.00%	100.00%
% at or Above Proficient	100.00%	50.00%	37.00%	53.00%	83.00%
% at Advanced	27.00%	16.00%	7.00%	9.00%	39.00%
Number Tested	22	19	44	23	23
Percent Tested	100.00%	100.00%	97.80%	100.00%	100.00%
Number Excluded	0	0	1	0	0
Percent Excluded	0.00%	0.00%	2.2%	0.00%	0.00%
Asian Students					
% at or Above Basis	100.00%		100.00%		100.00%
% at or Above Proficient	100.00%		100.00%		100.00%
% at Advanced	0.00%		0.00%		0.00%
Number Tested	1		2		2
Percent Tested	100.00%		100.00%		100.00%
Number Excluded	0		0		0
Percent Excluded	0.00%		0.00%		0.00%
Black Students					
% at or Above Basis	100.00%	100.00%	78.00%	73.00%	100.00%
% at or Above Proficient	100.00%	33.00%	22.00%	40.00%	100.00%
% at Advanced	23.00%	8.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Number Tested	13	12	32	15	9
Percent Tested	100.00%	100.00%	94.10%	100.00%	100.00%
Number Excluded	0	0	2	0	0
Percent Excluded	0.00%	0.00%	5.90%	0.00%	0.00%
Hispanic Students					
% at or Above Basis			0.00%	100.00%	
% at or Above Proficient			0.00%	0.00%	
% at Advanced			0.00%	0.00%	
Number Tested			1	1	
Percent Tested			100.00%	100.00%	
Number Excluded			0	0	
Percent Excluded			0.00%	0.00%	
Native American					
% at or Above Basis				0.00%	
% at or Above Proficient				0.00%	
% at Advanced				0.00%	
Number Tested				1	
Percent Tested				100.00%	
Number Excluded				0	
Percent Excluded				0.00%	

Mathematics Assessment Results - Grade 4 continued					
testing month : June					
Solace School	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
White Students					
% at or Above Basis	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
% at or Above Proficient	100.00%	71.00%	78.00%	100.00%	100.00%
% at Advanced	14.00%	29.00%	33.00%	33.00%	58.00%
Number Tested	7	7	9	6	12
Percent Tested	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Number Excluded	0	0	0	0	0
Percent Excluded	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Free/Reduced Lunch					
% at or Above Basis	100.00%	100.00%	86.70%	70.00%	100.00%
% at or Above Proficient	100.00%	46.00%	20.00%	30.00%	83.00%
% at Advanced	91.00%	9.00%	6.70%	0.00%	33.00%
Number Tested	11	11	15	10	12
Percent Tested	100.00%	100.00%	94.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Number Excluded	0	0	1	0	0
Percent Excluded	0.00%	0.00%	6.00%	0.00%	0.00%